

DAVID AND GOLIATH

Week #1 of a 3-Week Series, "Stories of the Bible"

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So this nerdy guy's having lunch at a cafe when these three tough bikers come in. And they look around and they decide they want to tease this guy a little bit. So they all sat at his table. And the first guy -- the first biker -- takes his cup of coffee and drinks it all. And then the second one grabs his sandwich and eats it all. And then the third one grabs his piece of pie and eats it all. And they all stare them and then they just started laughing at him right at the table.

And so one of the bikers says to the waitress, "Hey, can you believe that guy? We took his coffee; we ate his sandwich; we ate his pie. And he didn't even say a word! He's not much of a man, is he?"

And then the waitress looked at them and said, "Well, he's not much of a truck driver, either, because as he was leaving the parking lot, he ran over and destroyed three motorcycles."

[Congregation laughs] So ... Alright. So ...

So how many people here have ever had a big challenge or a big problem to face that was so big and overwhelming that you felt like you couldn't handle it. Anybody ever have something really big? And how many people here have ever allowed fear to stop you from trying or doing or asking or going after the life that you want to live? Anybody? And finally, how many people here would like to live without fear? To live fearlessly? Anybody?

So today we are going to talk about overcoming obstacles. And the biggest obstacle, I believe, is fear. Do you know in the Bible, it uses the phrase "*Fear not*" or "*Be not afraid*" over 365 times? And to me, that gives a pretty strong indication that learning how to deal with fear is one of the most crucial and important skills we can learn in our human experience, as well as on our spiritual journey. That how well we handle fear is a huge determiner on our level of peace; our level of happiness; the depth of love and joy; and the experience of abundance.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how well do you handle fear? And how much does fear influence your life and your decisions on a daily basis? And how willing are you to face your fears?

In the Book of Timothy, it says this:

"God has not given you a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love and self-discipline."

So today we begin a three-week series on famous Bible stories from the Old Testament. And, you know, the general theme of the Old Testament really comes down to one line. the entire theme of the Old Testament is: Listen to God and things will go well; don't listen to God and they won't go so well."

[Congregation laughs] And if I were to use a Scripture to kind of define what that generally means to me, it would be Proverbs 3, Verse 5-6, where it says:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding, but in all ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your path."

And so we can vary that up and say: Trust in God with all your heart; or listen to God with all your heart; or open yourself fully to sincerely to put God first in your life. And when you do that, good things will happen.

And it gives a little warning: Don't lean on your own understanding. Don't think you know, at a human level, all the answers! Because our human level is limited in how much we can understand. But God -- and spiritual understanding and wisdom -- is vast.

So how many people would say you could probably lean more into God in your life? And could listen more to God? And trust God more in your life? How many people would agree with that? And so it's a powerful and important thing: Listen to God and things will go well. Don't listen to God, and they won't go as well! And the way is to trust and lean into God.

So that's a theme we're going to look at for the next three weeks. The first story we're going to look at is the story of David and Goliath. It appears in 1 Samuel, Chapter 17. I'm not going to read it to you; it's kind of long. I'm just going to kind of re-tell it, because I think most of us know it.

There's these Philistines and the Israelites, and they're enemies. Now, their armies are there -- both on a hill. And they're kind of preparing for battle. And the Israelite army is way stronger than the Philistine army ... except the Philistines have a giant -- they said, like, nine feet tall in armor. And he was out in the valley between the hills, calling any of the Israelites to fight him. And none would. They were terrified! Even though they were a stronger army, they were so terrified of this giant that nobody would fight him. And every day for 40 days he went out and waited for someone to challenge him ... and none would. King Saul and the army thought he was undefeatable; nobody would touch it.

King Saul even tried to give some rewards to someone who would fight and kill Goliath, and there were no takers ... until this young shepherd boy, David, came along. And he said he would fight the Philistine. A little shepherd boy!

And then King Saul said, *"Are you kidding? You're a boy; he's a man! You're a shepherd; he's a warrior! He is trained; you are not."*

And David had such unshakable faith that he knew that he could do this. He said, *"Look; I've fought lions. I've fought bears. I can take out this giant."*

And so finally King Saul said, *"Okay; go ahead. You're out of your league, but go ahead."* And he gave him his armor, and he put it all on him, but it didn't fit.

And so David decided to do what was right for him, and he took a slingshot and got five smooth stones. Then they were facing each other, and they started trash talking each other. [Congregation laughs] They really did! [Congregation laughs] Some of it was very colorful; it was quite entertaining! [Congregation laughs]

But then, finally, David takes his slingshot -- boom! -- right between the eyes, and he defeats Goliath.

So let's look a little closer at this story. When you look at things metaphysically and spiritually, you look at all the characters and realize that they all represent some aspect within ourselves. Goliath represents any kind of big challenge of problem or difficult relationship. Or something that we think is blocking our good. That is blocking our happiness or our success. It is us perceiving an opposing force of something in our lives that is not allowing us to move forward to our path to the kind of life that we really want to live.

Now King Saul and the army in this story really represent a level of fear. They went to a place of being afraid and not believing they could possibly win or overcome. And what they did was: They judged by appearance. They saw the appearance of this boy and this giant and they thought, *"There's no way this is going to happen."* It's that part of us that can get, not only afraid, but overwhelmed and just frozen in our place because of fear. And we could only see the negative.

And then David represents that steadfast, unshakable faith. That level of trust of knowing that God is with us and this will work. *"I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me."* That there is a powerful belief that, *"God is with me and I can overcome anything."* And that faith was so unshakable it gave him the foundation to have the courage to step forward and the courage to face the great giant.

So my question for you is: What Goliath is in your life that you are feeling is blocking your path to the level of happiness and good that you would like to have and enjoy? What are the fears that you have that you feel are holding you back from acting and making decisions that will progress you toward what it is that you truly desire?

One of the things, I think, that Goliath really teaches us is that, regardless of the size of whatever the problem is, the real issue of fear comes from what's really going on in our own minds. So he just stood there, and everybody was terrified. I mean, all he had to do was just stand there, and they started telling themselves all kinds of stories: "*This isn't going to work.*" "*We're going to die.*" "*We're going to get destroyed.*" And again, their army was stronger! And yet, they still ended up creating ideas in their heads based on the appearance.

Anybody ever have a situation or a difficulty or a problem -- particularly with somebody in your life -- and then you start making up stories and scenarios of how things might go? You ever think, "*Oh, if they say this, I'll give them a piece of my mind!*"? [Congregation laughs] "*And if they say that, I'll never talk to them again! Then the friendship is over!*" Anybody ever put yourself through mental gymnastics of running scenarios? [Congregation laughs]

Mark Twain said it interestingly. He said, "*I'm an old man and I've known many troubles. But most of them never happened.*" [Congregation laughs] I mean, isn't it for real? Most of the things we stress and worry about never happen! We dwell in fear; fill our minds with fear based on the appearance of what that might be in our lives.

And we think it's that thing, but it's really what's going on within ourselves and our own mindset; in our own consciousness.

So what we're going to do now is look at the three things that David did to combat that obstacle of fear. And how to move beyond it to take on the giants in our lives.

And so the first thing that David did was that **HE FOCUSED ON GOD AND HE FED HIS FAITH**. One thing David is known for: He had unshakable faith. He absolutely believed in the Book of John -- 1 John, Chapter 4, Verse 4 -- where it says:

"Greater is he who is in me than he who is in the world."

David absolutely believed that God was greater than that giant. That God was greater than anything that he could ever face in his life.

David said to Goliath, "*You come to me with sword and spear and javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord.*" In the name and in the consciousness and in the nature of God, do I come! And so he was absolutely unshakable in his faith. His faith was so strong that, even though he was small; even though he was untrained; even though he was a shepherd, he absolutely had faith that, with God, he could conquer anything, even if it appeared to be greater than he could do.

Three things that David did to help him stay focused on God and feed his faith. The first one is: **he began all his prayers with praise and thanksgiving**. Praise and thanksgiving! Praising God for life; praising God for the sun and the mountains. And David was a musician. And so he would be singing and praising, too. So what a cool way: Singing praise! And then the other was he gave thanks. He gave thanks for his health; for his life; for his food; for the sheep; for all the things! Praise and thanksgiving: That's how he focused on God, and that's how he fed his faith.

The second thing is: David was not a perfect person by any stretch. But one of the things he did was: **He consistently prayed to God for guidance**. He consistently prayed to God for protection and direction, and to feel a deeper presence of God in his heart and in his life. David was the one who wrote most of

the Psalms. And so he contemplated and prayed and filled his mind with God so frequently that his faith and confidence just came out and became unshakable.

And the third thing that David did frequently was **remember how God had helped him in the past**. Here what it says:

"The Lord saved me from the paw of the lion and he saved me from the paw of the bear. and he will save me from the hand of the Philistine."

Could you imagine if, every day, we looked back -- especially when things aren't going well -- at all the ways that God has brought us through difficult situations? All of the ways that we've experienced God's love and joy and peace? All of the ways that we have risen above those challenges to be who we are? And then realizing that, whatever we are facing now, that same God who was always there for us is the same God that will get us through this.

There's no room for fear when the mind is focused on God! And we keep feeding our faith.

Here are some words that David absolutely lived by. In 1 Chronicles 28, Verse 20, here's what it says:

"Be strong and of good courage. And do it. Fear not; be not dismayed, for the Lord is with you. He will never fail you and he will never forsake you."

And this is the kind of faith that David developed. And he did it by focusing on God and feeding his faith.

My question for you is: How much time in your life do you focus on God currently? And are you feeding your faith? And how much more time would you be able and willing to focus on God and feed your faith? Because it is the first and the most important thing for rising above and dealing with fear.

The second one is that he did was **HE FACED GOLIATH AND HE CLAIMED HIS REWARD**. So why do you think David fought Goliath? [Pause] Okay; I'll tell you. [Congregation laughs] Here's why: Because he knew it was his to do. He absolutely knew that he is the one that was meant to face Goliath. That it was a part of his journey. It was a part of his calling. It was a part of the process of growing him into the great being and leader that he was meant to be.

Whatever Goliath is in front of you now: It is meant to be there for you. In the same way that Goliath was David's, whatever Goliath you're facing now is yours. It is exactly what you are meant to face. Now, most of us would rather just get rid of it; blink our eyes and get it away. But the truth is: We have to go through it. We have to live it. It is a part of our journey. And we can't run from it!

Katherine Ponder once said:

"Until you handle it with grace, it will always be in your face."

[Congregation laughs] Because if you run from this Goliath, you know what? There'll be another Goliath around the corner. That whatever it is, we need to face it and walk through it. And it might be for you in your life ... A Goliath for you might be being honest with someone that you need to be honest with. The Goliath could be saying "No" to something or saying "Yes." Or maybe it's letting go. Or maybe your Goliath is being willing to go after your dream, regardless of what anybody else thinks.

Somebody once said:

"Feel the fear and do it anyway."

Nike says:

"Just do it!"

So many years ago -- I think I've told you this -- in my first ministry in North Carolina, I was at group meeting, and we had a question that everybody was sharing. It was an icebreaker thing. And that was: What's one daring thing you would like to do? And mine was: *"I'd like to go skydiving."*

And so then the meeting broke up and, afterwards, a guy came up to me and he said, *"Hey, I'm the captain of the U.S. skydiving team."* [Congregation laughs] *"And if you would like, I could take you skydiving this afternoon!"* [Congregation laughs]

And I was like, [throws up hands in protest] *"Oh, I've got a lot of work; a lot of things; a lot of commitments."* Isn't it amazing how things work? Even when you say you want something how fear can just kick up in you?

And so it took me a couple of months, but I went with him. And it was terrifying and exhilarating. It was terrifying the whole experience, and it was exhilarating when my feet touched the ground again! [Congregation laughs] And then a month or so later, I went again, and it was less terrifying and it was more exhilarating. In fact, it was exhilarating while I was in the air. But I would have never known that if I'd allowed my fear to stop me.

Every single time we step towards our fear, and we face it, we gain a little bit more. A little more confidence; a little more awareness; a little more faith; a little more wisdom and insight and experience that grows us in amazing ways.

One of the things is that David had heard that there was a reward. He was curious about what the reward was. The reward was: an abundance of wealth; getting to marry King Saul's daughter; and the third was living tax free. You and your family living tax free. I thought that was a funny reward, but it was very practical, I guess.

And then he asked again and again, because he knew Goliath was his, but he knew that there was a reward. And so the reward is more than just the money and stuff; it was that he grew as a leader; as a man. He gained a sense of confidence. He gained a sense of purpose. He knew that his life was moving in that direction. And it wouldn't have happened -- at least at that point -- if he didn't face Goliath.

See, we have to face our Goliaths, because it's our work to do. And there are rewards. There's wisdom and understanding and strength that we will gain from it.

Emmett Fox said:

"Do it, trembling if you must, but do it!"

Because to not do it robs us and cheats us of greater understanding; greater growth and wisdom and insight.

And the thing about David; it advanced his soul. Because ultimately, shepherd boy became King David. Not only King David, but King David that they say Jesus was of the lineage and the House of David. Because that was the God consciousness that David began. And so Jesus being of the lineage of David is a pretty strong endorsement of David's growth and relationship and faith and consciousness.

And so the Goliaths in our lives are not there to mess you up; they're there to lift you up ... if we are willing to face them.

The third thing that I love that David did that demonstrates for us how to overcome fear is that **HE TRUSTED HIMSELF AND WAS TRUE TO HIMSELF**. Let me read you a little bit directly from Samuel 17:38. It says:

"Saul said to David, 'Go, and the Lord be with you.'

Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried to walk but he couldn't, because he was not used to them. They were not his.

'I cannot go in these,' he said to Saul, 'because I am not used to them.' So he took them off. Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream and put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag. And with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine."

And so what it's saying is: David would not have been successful had he worn someone else's armor. Had he put on someone else's image or idea of what he needed for that battle. The reason he succeeded is because he trusted and was true to himself. He did it the way he was meant to do it. He did it in the way that was in alignment with the gifts and abilities that he had.

It is only when we're true to ourselves that we can be true to God. And it's only when we're true to God that we can make the difference that we came here to make.

So my question: Where in your life are you wearing someone else's armor? Where in your life are you not being your true self? You're not trusting yourself? And you're not living as authentically the life that you desire and are meant to live?

Sometimes we can give in to what other people say and think and choose for peace -- just to go along with it and not honor who we are. David could have chosen to go in that armor. But it wouldn't have been true to who he was, and he would not have been able to succeed. And I do not believe we'll be able to do as much good and succeed in our lives unless we trust ourselves and we are true to ourselves.

I read an article that said that it is important to follow the beat of your own drum in order to make a difference in the world. That only people who feel fulfilled in what they are here to do are the ones who follow the beat of their own drum.

Scripture says:

"We are uniquely and wondrously made."

You're the only one of you in this entire world! And there are gifts and talents and abilities that you are here to share that no one else can give but you. And the only way you can deliver it is to trust yourself and be true to yourself.

Sometimes we say we want the goal of no fear. *"I want to live with no fear!"* You know what? That's not possible! It's not possible!!! We are built-in; it's an instinctive survival mechanism that's in our amygdala [in our brain]. It's just in us! That when there is the "fight or flight" response -- that when we sense or believe whatever is danger, it'll trigger either running away; shutting down; or fighting. It's in us!

But the thing is: There are different types of fears. You know, the fear of danger looks to the brain the same as the fear of learning or challenging ourselves. And so what we need to do is learn how to override the amygdala that just wants to shut down; run away; not have any confrontation; not speak up; not go after our dream ... and be able to override it.

So we can't get rid of fear; it's a part of the deal. It's a part of life. It is in the car as you drive down the road of life. The question is: Is it in the back seat or the driver's seat? [Congregation laughs] That's the choice we get to make. Fear is going to be there; that's a part of the deal! The question is: Where are you putting it in your life? Are you allowing it to drive and rule? Or are you using it in a way to make you stronger and wiser and grow and become more of who you came here to be?

Fear is a powerful thing that can limit our level of happiness. But we have the ability -- like David -- to focus on God and feed our faith with praise; with consistent prayers seeking directions; and

remembering all the good that God has done, and having faith that same God will help us through the current situation.

The second thing is to face your Goliath; it is yours! And to claim your rewards: the strength; the insight; the understanding that will come. It won't mess us up; it will lift us up if we let it.

And then the final is: Trust and be true to yourself. March to the beat of your own drum. Choose your own path. Because it's only when you're true to yourself can you be true to God. And when you're true to God, you will make the difference you came to make.

Overcoming fear and overcoming obstacles: That is the life lesson from the story of David and Goliath.

God bless you all!

[Congregants applaud]

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